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ABSTRACT

A major portion of the experiment described in this paper involved two classes which were taught with the basal reader alone and one class which was taught with a basal reader and story-related films. A secondary portion of the experiment involved the use of non-story-related films with a third group of students as a positive reinforcement for good performance in daily reading exercises and good classroom behavior. The experiment lasted one school year. The eighth grade subjects were pretested and posttested with the Gates-MacGinitie Survey E, forms 1 and 3. Since the material in the basal reader did not fill the entire school year, supplementary materials were used to avoid decreasing the length of the experiment. The examination of possible difference between pretest scores and posttest scores indicated no significant difference in favor of any of the three groups in vocabulary or comprehension. However, students in all three groups gained an average of one and one-half years in reading comprehension. (WR)

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Story-Related Films In Eighth Grade Developmental Reading

by

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The exposure of students to all forms of media is a facet of our present day culture. This ready availability of media suggests that some forms of media may be useful aids in the teaching of developmental reading. This writer considered the possibility of the use of a story-related film with a basal reader in order to increase student interest. Since it was then difficult to find a valid and reliable method of measuring the level of student interest, the areas which this writer did measure were those of vocabulary and reading comprehension.

The experiential background is one of the crucial factors in the process of learning to read.[1] It is difficult to provide these necessary experiences for a large group of children. The problem is further compounded when the children have a wide range of ability levels and the children have reached junior high school age. D'Annunzio[2] had a great deal of success with an experience based program which emphasized out of classroom experiences that were designed to shore up the experiential weaknesses of the students. However, this program was very costly. One might ask the question as to whether actual experiences are absolutely necessary. Could a vicarious experience be substituted for the actual experience? Furthermore, could this vicarious experience be provided on film? Research suggests that such an idea is feasible.

Wright[3] found that there was a negative correlation between intelligence and the exposure to television, films and comic books. Sterner[4] further found that children from lower socio-economic levels were not deprived of access to such media. Hoban[5] found that increased amounts of learning occurred when books and films were used together. Therefore, if the reader will accept the premises that a high percentage of junior high school developmental reading students score below the median on current measures of intelligence, have had a high degree of exposure to television, films, and comic books, and increased amounts of learning occur when films are used in conjunction with books on the same subject; such an idea does have a high degree of merit.

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[1]Wayne Otto and Richard A. McMenemy, Corrective and Remedial Teaching (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1966) pp. 330-331.

[2]Anthony D'Annunzio, "An Investigation of the Effects of Three Different Reading Programs on Junior High School Students" (Unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, Temple University, 1969).

[3]Edgar M. Wright, "Media Experience and the Comprehension of Film and Print" (Unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1963).

[4]Alice P. Sterner, Radio, Motion Picture, and Reading Interests (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1947).

[5]Charles F. Hoban, Jr., Some Aspects of Learning From Films, Incidental Report #2, Instructional Film Research Project (State College, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State College, 1949).

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A major portion of the experiment involved two classes which were taught with the basal reader alone and one class which was taught with a basal reader and story-related films. The basal reader which was used was Reading for Significance published by the American Book Company.[6] A secondary portion of the experiment involved the use of non-story-related films with a third group of students as a positive reinforcement for good performance in daily reading exercises and good classroom behavior. The experiment lasted one school year. Because it was logistically impossible to randomly assign the students to the three groups, it was necessary to use a statistical technique which would control any possible effects of a variable such as IQ upon the pre-test and post-test scores. The analysis of covariance technique was used for this purpose.

The students were pre-tested and post-tested with the Gates-MacGinitie Survey E, forms 1 and 3. Since the material in the basal reader itself did not fill the entire school year, supplementary materials were used rather than decrease the length of the experiment. When possible differences between pre-test scores and post-test scores were examined no statistically significant differences were found which favored any of the three groups in either vocabulary or comprehension. However, students in all three groups gained an average of one and one-half years in reading comprehension. Further research which involves the use of story-related films in reading instruction could examine the effects of story-related films when boys are compared with girls, when students of different socio-economic levels are compared, and when student attitudes are examined rather than vocabulary and reading comprehension.

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[6]Ulin W. Leavell and Alex M. Caughran, Reading for Significance (New York: American Book Company, 1959).

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About the Author

Dr. Robert H. Dech has taught in both the elementary and secondary schools of Pennsylvania and is currently employed as an Administrative Assistant with Lincoln Intermediate Unit #12 in New Oxford, Pennsylvania.

The experiment described in this article was performed by Dr. Dech as a classroom teacher and was the basis for his doctoral dissertation at Lehigh University.